



## TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT

### Planning Board Meeting of August 20, 2015

**Case No./Project Name:** SDP-88-080, Swansfield Elementary School, Village of Harpers Choice, Section 4, Area 4, Open Space Lot 1

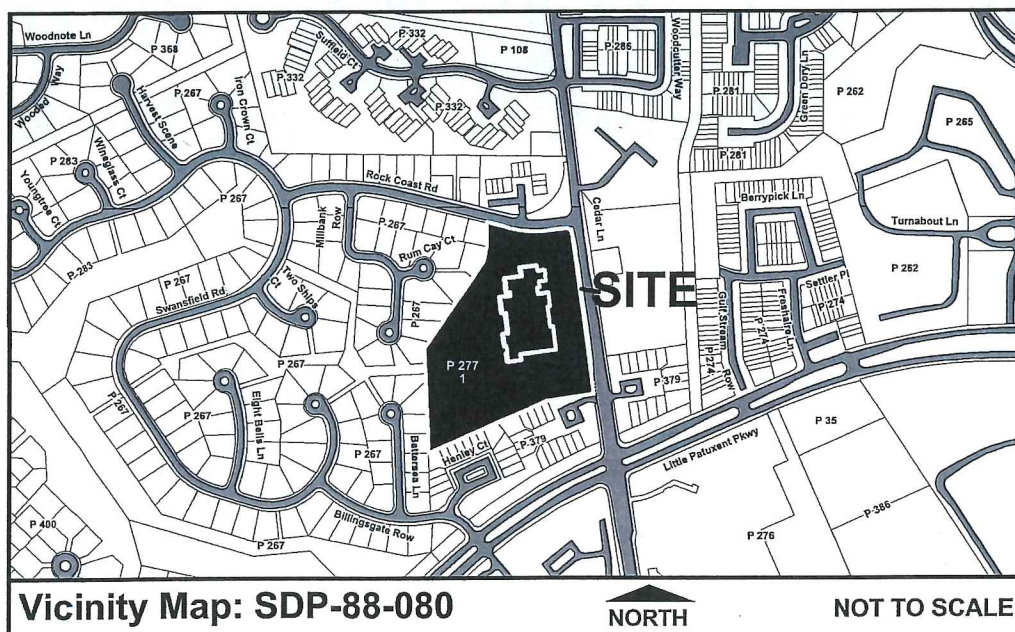
**Property Owner:** Howard County Public School System, Owner

**Subject:** The subject site is identified as "Village of Harpers Choice, Section 4, Area 4" on Tax Map 35, Grid 5, Open Space Lot 1, in the Fifth Election District of Howard County.

**Request:** The request is to approve a Site Development Plan (SDP) to construct an addition to the Swansfield Elementary School, parking areas, and required stormwater management on Lot 1, a 10.15 acre Open Space Lot which is Zoned New Town, Credited and Non-Credited Open Space (NT-OS) in accordance with Final Development Plan 94-A. Planning Board approval is required for the proposed building additions, activity areas, parking area, and to allow for an adjustment to the coverage requirements of Section 125.0.G.4, and Criteria 12E of the approved Final Development Plan.

**Location:** The subject site is located on the southwest intersection of Rock Coast Road and Cedar Lane.

**DPZ Recommendation:** **Approval**, subject to compliance with any comments from the Planning Board, and compliance with the SRC agency comments issued for SDP-88-080.

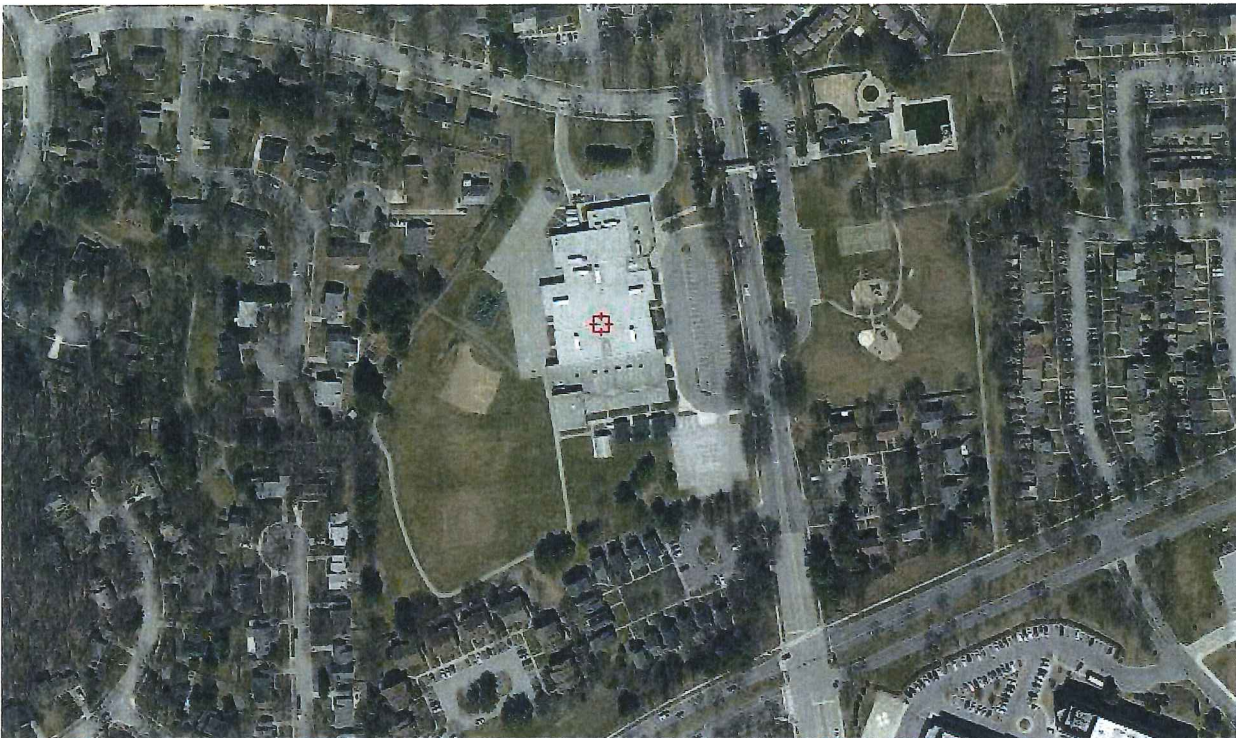




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### Vicinal Properties:

- To the south of the property are townhomes, Zoned: New Town – Single Family Medium Density.
- To the west are single family detached homes, Zoned: New Town – Single Family Low Density.
- To the north, directly across Rock Coast Road, are townhomes, Zoned: New Town – Single Family Medium Density.
- To the east, located across Cedar Lane, are tennis courts and the Village of Harper's Choice – Swansfield Neighborhood Center and Pool, Zoned: New Town – Employment Center Commercial.



### Site History:

**FDP-94:** recorded on July 21, 1970 as Plat Book 19, Folio 148.

**FDP-94-A:** recorded on July 8, 1994 as Plat 3054-A-1399, purpose was to change 2.644 Acres of Apartment land use to single family medium density land use.

**F-70-090:** Record Plat that outlined the Swansfield Elementary School boundaries was approved on September 10, 1970

**SDP-71-088:** Site Development Plan for the Elementary School Building was approved on August 31, 1971.

**SDP-88-080:** Site Development Plan for an Elementary School building addition was approved on February 3, 1988.



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### Legal Notice:

The subject property was properly posted with two (2) official Planning Board posters with the date, time and place of this meeting for 15 consecutive days prior to this public meeting. In addition, an electronic notification of the meeting was sent to the Columbia Village Boards, the Columbia Association, Howard County Council members and pre-submission meeting attendees who provided e-mail addresses.



### Site Analysis:

**Site Improvements** – The proposed site improvements include three additions to the existing building, the addition of a bioretention stormwater management facility, and improvements to the outdoor amenities affected by the building additions. There are three additions proposed for the elementary school: an approximately 15,000 square foot classroom addition at the rear of the building; an approximately 2,000 square foot activity addition adjacent to the existing gymnasium at the back of the school; and an approximately 1,150 square foot administration addition located at the front of the school. The additions will total about 18,150 square feet. The total building coverage of the school with the additions will be about 83,150 square feet. Outdoor amenity improvements include a grass paver strip from the southern parking lot to the portable units located at the rear of the school to facilitate emergency fire access. The parking lots along Cedar Lane are to be restriped to increase the parking for the school employees and administrators. The stormwater management facility will be installed near the grass paver pathway on the southern side of the property. The outdoor areas affected by the building additions will be renovated and restored per the plans.

**Storm Water Management (SWM)** – A single Bioretention BMP will provide the required environmental site design (ESD) volume. The BMP will be privately owned and maintained. A bioretention facility on the southern edge of the property is proposed to handle the stormwater management requirements.

**Environmental Considerations** - There are no wetlands, streams, buffers or 100-year floodplains located within the limit of disturbance. There are no forested areas located on site, but there are landscaping and scattered trees located around the perimeter and on adjacent properties.

**FDP Development Criteria Requirements** – The SDP is in compliance with all applicable

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requirements of FDP-94-A, except for the lot coverage requirements as outlined in Criteria 12. The FDP requires that no more than 10 percent of the land devoted to Open Space Land Use be covered by buildings or other major structures, unless as part of an SDP approved by the Planning Board.

- **Setback Requirement (Criteria Item 6):**

The FDP states that no structure shall be located within 30 feet of a public street, road or highway right-of-way, or within 25 feet of a property line. However, structures may be located on lots devoted to Open Space Land Use provided they are in accordance with a Site Development Plan approved by the Howard County Planning Board. All proposed building additions comply with the setback requirements.

- **Permitted Uses (Criteria Item 7):**

Lot 1 shall be used for public schools and recreational fields. The proposed building use is in compliance with this criterion.

- **Height Limitations (Criteria Item 8):**

No height limitation is imposed upon structures constructed within Open Space Land Use Areas, provided improvements are constructed in accordance with a site development plan approved by the Howard County Planning Board. The proposed maximum building height is 14'-0" for the main structure.

- **Parking Requirements (Criteria 9):**

No parking requirements are imposed upon any of the land within the Final Development Plan devoted to open space uses. The proposed plan restripes the existing parking areas for a total of 116 parking spaces, 3 handicapped spaces, and 10 bus drop off spaces.

- **Coverage Requirements (Criteria 12):**

In no event shall more than 10 percent of the land included within any lot within this Final Development Plan Phase be covered by buildings or other major structures, except in accordance with a Site Development Plan approved by the Howard County Planning Board. The lot coverage with the proposed building additions will be 18.8%.

**Lot Coverage Chart:**

Lot Area	10.15 Acres
Limit of Disturbed Area	1.55 Acres
Existing School Building	64,986 Sq. ft. (14.6% of Gross Lot Area)
Proposed Classroom Addition	15,000 Sq. ft. (3.4% of Gross lot Area)
Proposed Activity Addition	2,000 Sq. ft. (0.5% of Gross Lot Area)
Proposed Administrative Addition	1,150 Sq. ft. (0.3% of Gross Lot Area)
Total Proposed Building Area	83,136 Sq. ft. (18.8% of Gross Lot Area)
Existing Building Lot Coverage	14.6% (64,986 Square Feet)
Proposed Building Lot Coverage	18.8% (83,136 Square Feet )



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**Evaluation and Conclusions:**

In accordance with Section 125.0.G.4.d. of the Zoning Regulations, the requested lot coverage adjustment shall be evaluated and granted if the Planning Board finds that the following two criteria are satisfied:

1. **The adjustment will not alter the character of the neighborhood, will not impair the use or development of the adjacent property, and will not be detrimental to the public welfare.**

The adjustment will not alter the character of the neighborhood or area in which the property is located, nor will it impair the appropriate use and development of adjacent property, and will not be detrimental to the public welfare. The additions to the classroom, activity, and administrative areas are needed additions that will not impact any of the surrounding properties. The architecture proposed for the additions will fit with the style and appearance of the existing structure. The additions proposed are all internal to the school property and should not disrupt any of the adjacent properties or impede neighboring uses. The adjustments will not be detrimental to the public welfare since the improvements will enhance the functionality and safety of the school facilities.

2. **The adjustment is needed due to practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships which arise in complying strictly with the FDP and/or results in better design than would be allowed by strict compliance with the development criteria.**

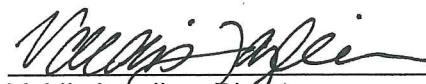
Extraordinary hardship and practical difficulties would arise in complying with the FDP regulations as the school currently exceeds the 10% lot coverage requirement set forth in FDP-94-A. The proposed school additions will provide much needed learning and activity space for both students and administrators. Strict compliance with the FDP regulations would result in a much smaller school facility with less space for the same student body.

**SRC Action:**

By letter dated July 29, 2015 the Department of Planning and Zoning determined that Site Development Plan SDP-88-080 is technically complete, subject to Planning Board Approval.

**Recommendation:**

The Department of Planning and Zoning recommends that the Planning Board approve this SDP subject to compliance with any comments from the Planning Board and compliance with the agency comments issued for SDP-88-080.

  
Valdis Lazdins, Director  
Department of Planning and Zoning

8-5-15  
Date

**Please note that this file is available for public review at the Department of Planning and Zoning's public service counter, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**